



## **Pregnancy/Postpartum Physical Training (PPPT) Frequently Asked Questions**

The following are some of the most frequently asked questions regarding pregnancy, exercise, and parenting as Active Duty Soldiers. More detailed information for Soldiers and Army Leaders may be found in USACHPPM Technical Guide 281A, [A Leader's Guide to Female Soldier Readiness](#) and Technical Guide 281B, [A Soldier's Guide to Female Soldier Readiness](#).

### **Q. Can participation in PPPT be mandatory?**

A. Enrollment and attendance in PPPT as the Soldier's place of duty during Physical Training (PT) time can be required by a commander. However, the level of participation and intensity of exercise a Soldier does is best judged by the Soldier herself. Consistent participation in moderate physical training most days of the week is healthy for a mom-to-be and her baby and recommended during healthy pregnancies. A pregnant Soldier should never exercise to exhaustion or breathlessness, but should exercise at her own pace to the best of her ability in order to maintain her fitness level as long as possible during pregnancy. If a Soldier feels unable to exercise at all, has conditions that limit exercise or is exhibiting any signs or symptoms that require special attention, she should be sent to sick call or referred to her health care provider.

### **Q. What assurance is there that the exercises in the PPPT Program are safe to do?**

A. Safety and the welfare of the mother and baby are the priority of the PPPT program. The exercises and fitness concepts that are included in the PPPT Program are consistent with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' guidance for exercise during pregnancy and the postpartum period. The training materials used to train the PPPT Program coordinators and exercise leaders have been endorsed by the Army Surgeon General, many of the Office of the Surgeon General consultants, and the US Army Physical Fitness School. The exercise leaders are trained to carefully monitor the safety of each Soldier, and educate the class on safety issues.

### **Q. What uniform is allowed during PPPT?**

A. The military PT uniform is to be worn as long as it is not restrictive. The shirt may be worn outside the trunks as the pregnancy progresses. Once the military PT uniform no longer fits or is uncomfortable, appropriate, modest civilian PT clothes may be worn. A Soldier will not be required to purchase a larger physical fitness uniform to accommodate the pregnancy. In the pool, the PT uniform or civilian PT clothes may be worn or a one-piece maternity swimsuit.

### **Q. What's the best way to ensure that the record APFT will be passed and height/weight standards will be met within 6 months after delivering the baby?**

A. Concerns from Soldiers and units regarding a Soldier's ability to pass her record APFT and meet height/weight standards are common. There are many factors that influence the amount of time it takes a Soldier to recondition back to her pre-pregnant fitness level including her previous fitness level, the type of delivery or pregnancy complications she had, how much weight she gained, and her postpartum exercise regimen. The postpartum PT Program is designed to assist



Soldiers in meeting these goals and emphasizes core strengthening exercises, upper body strengthening, and cardiovascular fitness with running and mobility drills. Postpartum Soldiers also receive periodic diagnostic APFTs and weigh-ins to help them track their progress and adjust their exercise routines to help them meet their goals. It is the goal of the PPPT Program to have every postpartum Soldier meet her fitness and weight goals by six months postpartum. With consistent participation and dedicated effort, this is a realistic goal that can be accomplished by most Soldiers.

**Q. What are the advantages of a structured PPPT Program versus PT done alone?**

A. Pregnancy changes a Soldier's body in ways that require a different approach to PT. Participation in PPPT provides a Soldier with a physical fitness training and health education program that meets the unique needs of pregnant and postpartum Soldiers. The PPPT Program provides a safe setting and trained leaders to assist Soldiers in making adjustments to their exercise regimen as the pregnancy progresses, and to teach special skills that will help with delivery and recovery. It also provides emotional support and encouragement through group activities with others who are in similar circumstances. Getting to know other Soldiers that are also moms can help give the reassurance, positive reinforcement, and motivation that are needed to meet the challenges of motherhood and return to required fitness levels.

**Q. Should a Soldier that has miscarried go to PPPT or to the unit for PT?**

A. A Soldier that has miscarried, which is defined as a pregnancy loss after 20 weeks, should participate in PPPT for a period of time before returning to regular unit PT. It can be a delicate and oftentimes uncomfortable situation, but the Soldier will benefit by having time to progressively recondition to her pre-pregnant fitness level before transitioning to unit PT. The Soldier should generally be placed in the initial postpartum PT group after returning from convalescent leave, in order to work on her core and abdominal strength, and improve her runtime. The length of time spent in PPPT will depend upon the individual Soldier, her specific circumstances, and the advice of her health care provider.

**Q. How long does a Soldier on profile for miscarriage have before a record APFT is required to be taken?**

A. IAW AR 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness, Feb 2005, paragraph 7-10 (pg. 72)  
[http://www.usapa.army.mil/pdffiles/r40\\_501.pdf](http://www.usapa.army.mil/pdffiles/r40_501.pdf)

Section a. Convalescent leave (as prescribed by AR 600-8-10) after delivery will be for a period determined by the attending physician. This will normally be for 42 days following normal pregnancy and delivery.

Section b. Convalescent leave after a termination of pregnancy (for example, miscarriage) will be determined on an individual basis by the attending physician.

Section e. In accordance with DOD Directive 1308.1, DoD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Program, June 2004, 4.1.6 Pregnancy (pg. 3)

[http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/d13081\\_063004/d13081p.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/d13081_063004/d13081p.pdf)

Pregnant Soldiers shall not be held to the standards of fitness and body fat testing and a postpartum Soldier is exempt from the APFT for 180 days following termination of pregnancy.



Soldiers are expected to use the time in preparation for the APFT after receiving clearance from their physician to resume physical training.

A Soldier is considered postpartum if she has delivered a child or had a termination of pregnancy after 20 weeks. In these cases the Soldier is exempt from the APFT for 180 days following termination of the pregnancy. Therefore, if a Soldier miscarries before 20 weeks, the 180 day APFT exemption does not apply and the length of the profile is determined on an individual basis by the attending physician. The APFT exemption would be a recovery period of twice the length of the profile not to exceed 90 days after the termination of their profile.

#### **Q. What is the guidance for work hours and duty limitations for pregnant Soldiers?**

A. The health of the pregnant Soldier and her unborn child are of the utmost importance. And, in the case of healthy pregnancies, should not significantly impact the ability of the female Soldier to do her job. Specific duty limitations for pregnancy are found in Army Regulation 40-501, Medical Standards of Fitness, paragraph 7-10. They include but are not limited to the following:

- If a Soldier is experiencing a normal pregnancy, a Soldier may continue to perform military duty until delivery. Only unusual and complicated problems will allow excuse from all duty, and medical personnel will assist unit commanders in determining duties. A Soldier will not be placed sick in quarters solely on the basis of pregnancy unless there are complications present that would preclude any type of duty performance.
- At **20 weeks** of pregnancy, a Soldier is exempt from standing at parade rest or attention for longer than 15 minutes, and participating in swimming qualifications, drown proofing, field duty, and weapons training. The Soldier should not ride in, perform PMCS on, or drive vehicles larger than light medium tactical vehicles.
- At **28 weeks** of pregnancy, a Soldier must be provided a 15-minute rest period every two hours. Her workweek should not exceed 40 hours, and she should not work more than eight hours in any one day. The duty day begins when reporting for formation or duty and ends eight hours later.

#### **Q. Can a pregnant or postpartum Soldier be flagged for being overweight?**

A. Pregnancy creates some special considerations in the Army Weight Control Program (AWCP). The governing regulation is AR 600-9. *If a Soldier is not enrolled in the AWCP at the time of a pregnancy*, she is exempt from weight control standards for the duration of the pregnancy, plus six months following termination of the pregnancy, and will not be flagged for exceeding the screening weight table during this time.

If the Soldier fails to meet the weight standard after the six-month period, she must be medically cleared by a health care provider and then enrolled in the AWCP. *If a Soldier is enrolled in the AWCP at the time of a pregnancy* she will remain flagged for the duration of the pregnancy and for a period of up to six months after termination of her pregnancy. She may request to be weighed or measured any time prior to the expiration of the six-month recovery period, and if she is within standard, she will be removed from the AWCP. If she does not meet standard at the



end of the six-month recovery time, she will continue in the AWCP as a continuation, not a new enrollment.

**Q. When does a single pregnant Soldier have to move out of the barracks?**

A. Obtaining affordable, appropriate housing for a single pregnant Soldier is an issue that needs to be well-planned. Poor planning can increase the financial burden on the single Soldier and create a number of problems down the road. Pregnant Soldiers living in barracks are authorized to remain in the barracks until they deliver. Check with the First Sergeant and the installation housing office for the local policy governing when a Soldier is authorized to move out of barracks and to receive Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH).

In cases in which a single Soldier elects (with the permission of her chain of command) to vacate the barracks prior to delivery, she is entitled to BAH at the "without dependents" rate and Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) in order to establish a home prior to the birth of the child. A single Soldier is authorized to put her name on the military housing waiting list once the pregnancy is confirmed by a medical authority; however, family housing will not be assigned nor will the Soldier be eligible to receive BAH at the "with dependents" rate until the birth of the child. Timely completion of the paperwork required for BAH and BAS will greatly ease this transition and allow the pregnant single Soldier to focus on what is really important.

**Q. What is the guidance for field duty during pregnancy and postpartum?**

A. Army Regulation 40-501 states that at 20 weeks pregnant, a Soldier is exempt from field duty. A postpartum Soldier receives a four-month deferment from duty away from her home station immediately following the birth of a child. Although breastfeeding is highly recommended and supported, it does not exempt a postpartum Soldier from going to the field.

**Q. When can a Soldier be deployed after giving birth?**

A. In the new role as a Soldier and mother, it is important for Soldiers to be responsible parents and also be fit and ready to perform the mission. Army Regulation 614-30, Overseas Assignments, states that a Soldier is considered available for worldwide deployment four months after giving birth. Except under unusual circumstances, a pregnant Soldier is not reassigned to overseas commands until her pregnancy is terminated. It is important to be prepared by having a Family Care Plan. According to AR 600-20, a single parent or dual military couple is REQUIRED to have a Family Care Plan in place to remain on active duty.